
REMARKS
ON
EDUCATION.

James Page.

GRAMMAR

OR

EDUCATION.

REMARKS ON EDUCATION:

ILLUSTRATING THE CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN

VIRTUE AND WISDOM.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

A SYSTEM OF LIBERAL EDUCATION.

WHICH, HAVING RECEIVED THE PREMIUM AWARDED BY THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, DECEMBER 15th,
1797, IS NOW PUBLISHED BY THEIR ORDER.

BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, A. M.

MEMBER OF THE AM. PHIL. SOCIETY.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE American Philosophical Society offered last year, among other premiums, one of an hundred dollars "for the best System of liberal Education and literary instruction, adapted to the genius of the Government of the United States; comprehending also a plan for instituting and conducting public schools in this country, on principles of the most extensive utility"—They reserved to themselves, however, the right of giving, in all cases, such part only of any premium proposed, as the performance should be adjudged to deserve; or of withholding the whole, if it should appear to have no merit above what may have been before published on the subject. But candidates were assured that the Society would always judge liberally of their several claims.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

VARIOUS communications having, in consequence, been received, the Society, at a stated meeting held on the 15th of December 1797, proceeded to the adjudication of the premium. Although none of the Systems of Education then under review appeared to them so well adapted to the present state of Society in this Country, as could be wished; yet considering the superior merit of two of the performances, the one entitled "An Essay on Education;" the other, "Remarks on Education: Illustrating the close connection between Virtue and Wisdom: To which is annexed, a System of liberal Education;" the Society adjudged to each of the authors a premium of 50 dollars, and ordered the Essays to be published. On opening the sealed letters accompanying these performances, it appeared that the former was written by the REV^D. SAMUEL KNOX of *Bladensburg, Maryland*; and the latter by SAMUEL H. SMITH of *Philadelphia*.

Extract from the minutes.

JONATHAN WILLIAMS,

One of the Secretaries.

Philadelphia, December 15th, 1797.

P R E F A C E.

THE following pages were written in the summer of 1796. They are presented to the public with only a few verbal alterations, as they were then written. New ideas have since occurred to the author, and those which are contained in the essay might, in many instances, have been better expressed. But as the production, as it now appears, received the premium, it was thought improper to make any substantial additions.

As this performance may be read by some persons unacquainted with the author, it may be proper to state that he neither claims the reverence due to age, nor the respect attached to established reputation—The fewness of his years preclude the former, while his moderate attainments withhold the latter. If the efforts which he has made shall excite the genius of his fellow-citizens, and he shall prove, in a degree however limited, the instrument of attracting the public attention to a subject of all others the most momentous, he will be rewarded to the extent of his wishes.

REMARKS ON EDUCATION.

THE man, who aspires to the honour of forming a system of education adapted to a republic, should either possess the capacity of original reflection, or that of improving, without adopting, the ideas of others. His hatred to vice, and aversion to error, should be as strong, as his attachment to virtue, and love of truth. He should look upon the sentiments of the dead with distrust, and oppose with intrepidity the prejudices of the living. As the tribunal to which he appeals may be shrouded in delusion, he must have the courage to rend the veil that intercepts the light of truth. He must consider the first suggestions of his own mind as treacherous; nor suffer them to form a link in his chain of reasoning, till they shall have passed the ordeal of reiterated investigation. Having undergone this trial unimpaired, he will dare to hold them forth to truth, as her legitimate offspring, and to prejudice, as her

merited scourge. No motive can bear him through this arduous performance, but a supreme sense of duty, which, feeling ample retribution from the consciousness of doing good, neither solicits nor despises general applause.

THE two great objects of a correct education are to make men virtuous and wise.

THE terms ~~virtuous and wise~~, do not seem susceptible of absolute definition. Accordingly, as applied to different persons, and varying circumstances, they present different aspects; though it be possible, nay probable, that the elements or first principles of each, however modified by endless combination, are the same. This hypothesis derives some confirmation from the great affinity of one virtue to another, and the close alliance between the several departments of science and literature.

WITHOUT attempting precise definition, it may be sufficiently correct, so far as it regards the objects of this essay, to style VIRTUE that active exertion of our faculties, which, in the highest degree promotes our own happiness and that of our fellow-men; and WISDOM, that intelligent principle, which improves our faculties, affords them the means of useful exertion, and determines the objects on which they are exercised.

WHILE wisdom and virtue have united, time immemorial, to panegyrisé each other in reference to the general good they produce in the world, two

questions of great importance have remained undecided ; viz.

I. WHETHER wisdom and virtue are in any degree necessarily connected ; and if they are, whether universally, or partially ?

II. WHETHER wisdom, in its greatest practical extension, would, if universally diffused, produce the greatest portion of general happiness ?

It will be acknowledged that these points deserve a patient discussion, as their decision will determine the definite objects of education ; and as it is absolutely necessary that man should know the *objects* he desires to accomplish, before he can apply, with the prospect of a successful result, the *means* adapted to secure them.

I. THE first enquiry is, “ Whether wisdom and virtue are, in any degree, necessarily connected ; and if they are, whether universally, or partially ? ”

It has been the opinion of some distinguished philosophers that virtue and instinct are the same ; and that a wise providence has not left the direction of the moral principle under the capricious and feeble influence of reason : while others have contended, that although man be by nature ignorant and entirely destitute of moral principle, yet that he possesses faculties capable of high improvement, if not of perfection itself. Both these systems, notwithstanding their numerous votaries, are probably founded in error.

IF instinct and virtue be synonymous, it is clear, that where there is most instinct, there should be most virtue, and that, as the brute creation possess instinct in a much higher degree than man, they must likewise possess virtue in a higher degree. This result will not be seriously contended for by any one. For, however ferocious and ignorant man may be, he is infinitely surpassed in these qualities by every animal that has the capacity of being ferocious. In this contrast too, it is proper to observe, that, however the instinct of the brute may withhold him from doing injury, it seldom, if ever, inspires him with the ardour of doing good.

WERE instinct and virtue the same, it would be clear that the infant would be more virtuous than his sire, and the savage inhabitant of the forest more virtuous than the offspring of civilization and science. For the ears of the infant are open to the voice of nature alone, while those of its parent are not altogether regardless of the dictates of reason. A precise analogy exists between the infant and its parent, and the savage and civilized man; the mind of the savage is still in its infancy, while civilization, if the expression be allowed, imparts manhood to the mind.—If this point remain still undecided in the mind of any, let it be asked, if the idiot or the lunatic are ever esteemed virtuous? It will then be seen that virtue without reason is a phantom which never existed.

THOSE, who would ascribe every thing to reason and nothing to nature, probably adopted their ideas,

more from a conviction, that the rival system was false, than from any distinct conviction of the truth of their own ; and from that disposition of the mind, which makes us readily, if not eagerly, embrace the reverse of that which we have found to be erroneous.

To affirm that because education does much, it can therefore accomplish every thing, is to pronounce a maxim refuted by universal experience. Every circumstance in this life partakes of a finite nature ; and the power of education, however great, has doubtless its limits.

HOWEVER difficult, if not impossible, it might be to gain the assent of some philosophers to the system of natural inequality in reference to virtue or capacity ; they will, without hesitation, agree, that the physical part of man is infinitely modified by nature ; they will also grant, that an infinite variety seems to be delighted in by the author of nature ; and that this variety is most displayed in those works, which abound, in the highest degree, with qualities that excite our admiration or regard. Both these instances, borrowed from material objects, furnish striking analogies, illustrative of the existence of variety of morality and intellect in different minds uninfluenced by education. Is it to be believed that an object so important, as variety appears to be in the estimation of the author of nature, should be left to the controul of causes, operating so unequally, and in so contracted a sphere, as rea-

son and civilization? Were it to depend entirely on these accidental circumstance, might it not be highly endangered? Might it not be lost?

THERE are some things, which, however controverted by the refinements of philosophy, will always continue to be held in secure belief by the good sense of mankind. Such is the conviction of natural bias; of one person possessing genius; another, fancy; a third, memory; &c.—

THE deductions from this concise and necessarily superficial view of a subject, in some respects intricate, are, that nature is neither so liberal, nor education so omnipotent, as the rival systems affirm; that man is indebted to both; that certain passions are born with him, which he cannot exterminate, but may control; that a varied capacity is imparted to him, which, by education he can weaken or improve. But, that still the traces of nature are visible in his thoughts and actions; and that her voice never ceases to be heard amidst all the refinements of art.

BUT even granting, what is far from being the truth, that man, unenlightened by education, has engraven upon his heart certain great principles of duty, and is possessed of the means necessary for their discharge, it yet remains uncontested, that these principles are few and undefined; and that they do not comprehend half the relations in which men stand towards each other. It follows, of course,

that they must be extended and improved, before they can answer the great purposes for which they were originally implanted in man, and submitted to his guidance, modification and extension.

BESIDES, it should never be forgotten in discussions similar to this, that man is already in a great degree civilized ; and that though it may be possible for the savage to resist the force of improvement, and remain unshaken in his attachment to his original state, yet that man, once civilized, has it not in his power to return to his natural condition. He may overturn all the trophies of the arts, he may consign to the flames every vestige of science, he may extinguish every spark of genius ; but he is still unable to reduce himself to the savage state. We behold him more debased, perhaps, than the barbarian, but without his ferocity. The world abounds with scenes in which the triumphs of science have been succeeded by the most brutal ignorance ; over which fear, meanness, and indolence have spread their gloomy features ; features the very opposite of those which characterize the savage life.

WE cannot, therefore, err in assuming it as a fact that virtue and wisdom are in some degree necessarily connected ; that the crude wisdom which nature bestows is unequal to the production and government of virtue, such as man in his pursuit of happiness discovers it to be his interest to practice ; and that to inture this desirable object, it is necessary

that the original faculties of the mind should be vigorously exercised, extended, and strengthened.

It still remains to be considered whether wisdom and virtue are partially or universally connected.

It is generally agreed that no being can be perfectly good without being perfectly wise. Such is the sublime idea we form of deity. It will be observed that perfect goodness is not here made to depend solely on the *intention* of the agent, but also on the *good effected*; as we now consider virtue an efficient principle exerting all the energies of its nature.

THE assertion that the man, who, without equalling this character, approaches it the nearest, would partake in the highest degree of the divine excellence, might be deemed correct, were not the world full of examples of men, who, though possessed of comprehensive powers of mind, are not only deficient in the exercise of virtue, but actually famed for the most profligate indulgence in vice. This enigma, however, admits of easy solution. Great endowments of mind are so rare, that they are seldom displayed without exciting more envy than attachment. He, who not only admires but esteems another for his talents, must possess no inconsiderable portion of talent himself; just as the best evidence of a supreme love of virtue is a high regard for the source of all virtue. The class of men possessed of these qualities being small, and that pos-

essed of different, if not hostile qualities, being very numerous, it is not surprising that resentment and malice should be active in their efforts to crush so formidable an adversary. Thus the most unworthy means are used to nip in the bud talents qualified to enlarge the sphere of human happiness.

HUMAN virtue has its limits. To be the object of unceasing calumny and detraction, without fighting for vengeance, would argue an apathy of heart by no means mortal. The subject of oppression, has now, in his turn, recourse to those means, which had been so successfully applied to his ruin; and finding them successful, he throws away the crutch of truth for the staff of deception. Ceasing to feel an interest in that virtue which he had just seen so much despised, his ambition grasps objects which bring with them immediate gratification, and lull the conscience to a dangerous repose. Wealth, power, and pleasure, throw out their gay and splendid solicitations, and virtue is exiled from the heart in which it lately delighted to dwell.

THIS would not be the case, if virtue and talents were as common as vice and ignorance. The moment a majority enlist themselves on the side of the former marks the æra of their eternal reign. This æra is that which all good and great men should unite to hasten.

FROM a review of history, it will appear, that just in proportion to the cultivation of science and the

arts has the happiness of man advanced in the nation which cultivated them. And this arose in a great measure from this consideration. The wants of nature are few in its unimproved state. Man of course is exempt from the necessity of making any great efforts for his support. He is therefore indolent. Not dependent on another, for any thing which his heart holds dear, he is reserved, distant, unaccommodating in his deportment. He scarcely merits the epithet of a social being. Of course, if his vices are not numerous, his virtues are still less so.

THE very reverse of this takes place as society improves. The dearest part of man's happiness, in this stage of his existence, is connected with a supply of articles, which depend on the industry of one, who is alike dependent on him. Hence a reciprocity of wants! Hence the origin of new and permanent regards, the parents of a thousand new virtues! From what source do these proceed, but from the developement of reason, suggesting to man the improvement of his situation? This improvement seems susceptible of endless extension. Hence the conclusion, that reason in alliance with virtue admits of progression without termination, and that the purity of the last is best secured by the strength of the first.

WE proceed to consider,

II. WHETHER wisdom itself, in its greatest extension, would, if universally diffused, produce the greatest portion of general happiness.

THE affirmative side of this question will be illustrated by considering ;

THAT the diffusion of knowledge actually produces some virtues, which without it would have no existence, and that it strengthens and extends all such virtues as are generally deemed to have, in a limited degree, an existence independent of uncommon attainments. And that,

THE exercise of these virtues is the only certain means of securing real happiness.

THE virtues, which are the exclusive and appropriate offspring of an enlightened understanding, are those which are disconnected with any particular time, person, or place. Existing without reference to these, a spirit of universal philanthropy is inspired, that views the whole world as a single family, and transfers to it the feelings of regard which are indulged towards the most amiable of our acquaintance. This sentiment, free from the alloy of personal consideration, or national attachment, lifts the mind to an elevation infinitely superior to the sensation of individual regard, superior to the ardent feelings of patriotism, and rivals, in a measure, the enjoyment of the sublime ideas we connect with the apprehension of the divine mind. This tone of mind must acknowledge congeniality with the noblest virtues. The mind is full and yet tranquil. The turbulence of passion is subdued into a reverence of reason. Man feels himself too en-

nobled to do a base or a mean thing. He yields to an irresistible enthusiasm to achieve whatever unites the highest portion of greatness with the largest portion of goodness. Language is inadequate to the description of the feelings of a man thus inspired; it hastens to his actions, which can receive only a feeble delineation.

It will be found still more unequivocally, that a diffusion of knowledge strengthens and extends all such virtues as have in a limited degree an existence, independent of uncommon attainments. This class of virtues comprehends those which are created by the relation in which one man stands to another, and which are the basis of what may be denominated common duty.

THE discretion with which man is vested implies the necessity of some knowledge. Were it not for this possession, he would be the sport of casualty and accident. He would nominally be his own master, but really a slave to some unknown power.

NATURE appears to have been liberal in its endowments to most of her offspring, as far as respects the preservation of each species; but to have been least liberal in this respect to man; doubtless because she has lavished her bounty in imparting to him alone the capacity of gradual and large improvement.

THE doctrine of original depravity here affords a forcible illustration. It is not material to decide

whether this belief be correctly true in the extent to which some writers have carried it ; or whether the alleged depravity be a crime, or only a defect. It is sufficient that such a belief almost universally prevails, and that all mankind acknowledge the vast intermediate space that lies between the barrenness of the state of nature, and the improvement effected by a liberal education. This general opinion of mankind is alike authoritative in regard to virtue as well as reason. If it has any superior application, it tends more to establish, in the natural state, the absence of virtue than of intellect.

ALL agree that virtue can never be carried too far. But does not the truth of this remark depend entirely upon the manner in which virtue is directed, or more properly, perhaps, on an accurate definition of it ? If this be true, will not the greatest portion of virtue be ascribed to the man, who, with given means, accomplishes the most good ? And is not this the same with saying that virtue in its highest exercise requires the greatest attainments ? If it be enquired what these attainments should be, it may be replied that, as all knowledge is susceptible of practical application, and is abused when it does not receive such application, it is improper to fix any limits to the improvement of the mind, which in proportion to its extension is qualified to effect general good.

“ IN general and in sum, says lord Bacon*, certain it is, that *veritas* and *bonitas* differ, but as the seal and the print ; for truth prints goodnefs, and they be the clouds of error, which descend in the storms of passion and perturbation.”

THE duties of men are precisely co-extensive with their knowledge. If that be granted, which cannot be denied, that every man is bound to do all the good he can, then follows clearly the obligation of every one to enlarge the powers of his mind, as the only means of extending the sphere of his usefulness.

It has been observed, in refutation of these remarks, that half the knowledge of which philosophy boasts, withdraws the mind from useful employment, by occupying it with considerations of idle curiosity and unproductive speculation. But if it be enquired by whom this observation has been made, it will appear that literature and science disclaim it; that it has generally arisen from the indolence and envy of ignorance, or sprung from the malice of blasted pretensions. It is true that he whose years revolve in acquiring, without using, learning, is even more selfish and criminal than the miser, as he hoards from society a greater good ; and, in this view of the subject, what Bacon says is strictly just ;

* Bacon, vol. 2. p. 447.

“ As for the philosophers, they make imaginary laws for imaginary commonwealths, and their discoveries are as the stars, which give little light, because they are so high.”*

BUT has that science been ever named, the prosecution of which is entirely unconnected with the general good? Has not astronomy, now acknowledged to be the most sublime of studies, which unites whatever is great and astonishing both on the moral and physical scale, been the theme of unconscious ignorance and folly? Has not chemistry been assailed by the too successful satire of illiterate wit? That satire which now fastens on the departments of Natural History and Botany? Has not superstition attempted to identify astronomy and profanity; and for a time succeeded? And yet astronomy [Note A.] now holds, by an undissenting voice, an elevated rank among the sciences; and chemistry, notwithstanding the philosopher's stone, unfolds, every day, its high practical importance; and discoveries, which, at first, promised only cold speculative truth, have produced the greatest practical good. [Note B.]

IT is worthy of remark, that all kinds of knowledge are intimately allied, and that the perfection of one department of science depends as much on the advancement of other departments, as it does on the accurate developement of its own peculiar principles [Note C.] An exclusive devotedness of

* Bacon, vol. 2. p. 537.

the mind to one branch of knowledge, instead of enlarging, will impair it. Instead of furnishing it with truth, it will burthen it with error. Of this tendency Locke relates several whimsical instances.

“A METAPHYSICIAN,” he says, “will bring plowing and gardening immediately to abstract notions; an alchymist will reduce divinity to the maxims of his laboratory, and allegorise the scriptures into the philosopher’s stone. And I heard once a man, who had more than ordinary excellence in music, seriously accommodate Moses’s seven days of the first week, to the seven notes of music, as thence had been taken the measure and method of creation.” He, therefore, who grants it to be necessary that one science should be deeply explored, yields more than the superficial observer imagines. He acknowledges the propriety of applying all the necessary means, and these will be found to embrace a considerable acquaintance with almost every branch of knowledge.

WERE a specification to be made of those circumstances most closely connected with the happiness of man, it would appear in how eminent a degree they are promoted by a cultivated understanding.

UNDER the head of morals, it would appear, that the virtues appropriate to a family would be secured as well as rendered more captivating; secured by the enlightened conviction of the intimate connecti-

on between duty and interest: rendered more captivating by their borrowing a new character from the liberal spirit inspired by reason. To the natural tie of parental regard would be added the grateful sensation excited in the mind of a child from the communication of new ideas, and the production, of course, of new pleasures. To the magic of instinct would be superadded the charm of reflection.

THE sense of justice and honesty would be confirmed by the folly of injustice and dishonesty. Supposing a general illumination of mind to prevail, the means of detecting, and the consequences of exposing, dishonesty, would be so easy and serious, that every rational being would see his interest inseparably connected with justice and honesty.

PATRIOTISM, a virtue which has fertilized the barren rock and given the greatest expansion to the mind and the heart, would become a steady and a rational principle. Founded on an unprejudiced attachment to country, we should cease to glory in error, solely because it proceeded from our ancestors. Love of country would impel us to transfuse into our own system of economy every improvement offered by other countries. In this case, we should not be attached so much to the soil, as to the institutions and manners, of our country.

In physics, it would appear, that in proportion to the extension of philosophical research, new connections and relations are discovered between natu-

ral objects, which result in discoveries of high practical use ; promoting whatever tends to the convenience and comfort of social life, enlarging the sphere of harmless gratification, and giving birth to new, and frequently ingenious occupations.

It remains to be considered, whether the exercise of the enumerated virtues, be not the only mean of securing real happiness.

No necessity is believed to exist, to prove, that a system of pure selfishness is hostile in the highest degree to happiness. If this system should find any advocates but those whose object it is to dazzle by ingenuity and wit, instead of convincing by argument, I would appeal to the universal odium attached to an indulgence of those passions which centre entirely in selfish enjoyment. Avarice, drunkenness, monastic seclusion, are all now the objects of impartial execration. while the practiser of these selfish indulgencies holds in as great contempt the world which despises him, and feels himself independent only in wretchedness.

I SHALL not dwell longer on this subject, but assume, from what has been already said, and from that which must obviously suggest itself to every mind, that the exercise of feelings which lead to beneficent actions is the surest pledge of internal happiness.

WHETHER reason itself would be fertile in the production of virtue need not be decided. It is probable that reason is only that power which directs the passions to their fit objects, and determines the force with which they ought to be applied. Rousseau says, " It is by the activity of our passions, that
" our reason improves ; we covet knowledge merely
" because we court enjoyment, and it is impossible
" to conceive, why a man exempt from fears and
" desires should take the trouble to reason. The
" passions, in their turn, owe their origin to our
" wants."*

THE passions, as imparted by nature, are few, but impetuous. The whole energy of the soul here speaks in every word and action. The conduct of one individual to another, in proportion as man obtains a more correct knowledge of duty, becomes the subject of a certain portion, often a moderate one, of praise or blame, of reward or punishment. And, accordingly, civilized man is as cautious in pronouncing an opinion on the conduct of the person who invites his strictures, as unbridled passion is impetuous and rash. The last knows no gradations between virtue and vice, and of course loves or hates in the extremest degree. The consequence is, that man is miserable ; as miserable perhaps from the consciousness of ill directed vengeance or misapplied regard, as from the sense of undeserved resentment.

* Rousseau on Inequality of mankind, 8vo. Edit. p. 40.

IN proportion to the advancement of the arts and sciences, the passions are increased in number, and abridged in force, by the diversity of objects which solicit their exercise. Man, reduced from a fullen state of independence, becomes the subject of innumerable wants, the centre of innumerable pleasures. Avarice, so congenial to ignorance and indolence, is robbed of more than half its violence by the love of pleasure, and a regard to popular opinion. It never fails to be as much weakened in the vortex of activity, as it is cherished in the listlessness of seclusion. In large commercial towns there are few misers. In monasteries they abound. Besides the ambition of acquiring more keeps afloat immense riches, which circulate till they become the inheritance of an heir, who seldom feels a disposition to hoard them.

PITY is said by some writers to be the strongest passion of nature. But how does it operate?—Upon every object it meets. Accident accomplishes everything. Entirely mechanical, it as frequently encourages vice, as it relieves virtue. Whereas knowledge produces discernment and discrimination. The benevolence of an improved mind is virtue, because it aids merit in distress; natural pity is often vice, because it is blind, and as frequently assists the wicked as the good; perhaps oftener, as virtue is more averse to solicitation than vice.

LET us consider the different effects of pity and benevolence, as here distinguished, on the person

who exercises them. Pity is a mere natural impulse ; there is no merit in obeying its voice ; the good which it does is forgotten as soon as accomplished ; all the happiness it affords is confined to a moment, and this is an unreflecting happiness ; it is the happiness of an infant.—Benevolence, on the contrary, is never practised without reflection. It chooses its objects with care, which when chosen it is liberal in rewarding. It does not give to depravity the debt due to virtue, and thereby generate self-reproach. Virtue and merit are its creditors, to whom it ever struggles to be just. Gratitude, almost unknown to the dispenser of pity, is the offspring of benevolence. Remembrance recalls, perhaps heightens, the pleasures excited by the good effected ; and he, who is actuated by enlightened benevolence, is amply rewarded by his own feelings, independently of the treatment he may receive from the object of his bounty, or the propitious influence of his actions on his future peace.

THE same remarks, illustrating the difference between the passions of the ignorant and the wise, might be extensively applied with but little variation. Suffice it in addition to say that with the wise, inclination is supplanted by duty, caprice by consistency. Emulation and competition too come in with all their forces, and, perhaps, produce more virtue in the world than they found in it. [Note D.]

HE who has been accustomed to feel within himself the resource of reflection, and the capacity of

improvement, delights in abstracting his attention from grovelling pursuits, and in disengaging himself from the sordid cares of low occupation. However impossible it be for him entirely to withdraw himself from these engagements, yet he always possesses an unexhausted treasure, on which he may draw, when oppressed with them. Neither the mind nor the body seem designed for one uniform employment. The more extensive the objects, therefore, within the reach of man, the larger is his circle of enjoyment. History enforces the truth of this remark. Who more happy as well as distinguished, than they who alternately exchanged the plough for the closet; who now procured food for the body, and now sought food for the mind? Who more unrivalled in tranquil pleasure, in unambitious retirement, in splendid consideration, than Cincinnatus?

THAT man seems, on the whole, to be the most happy, who possessed of a large stock of ideas, is in the constant habit of encreasing them, and whom every hour of his existence renders more informed. The energy of such a mind is almost without limits; it admits of constant activity; for when fatigued with one train of ideas, it finds repose in another. A rich variety of enjoyment is ever before it, the bare consciousness of possessing which is sufficient of itself to make it happy.

SOME notice is due to the objections to the connection between knowledge and happiness. It is said that a refinement of ideas disciplines the mind

to an attention to common objects, to which a very moderate degree of reflection is equal. This objection, if it has any present force at all, would be wholly removed by that knowledge becoming common which is now rare. We now find it to be the general exclamation that prosperity is altogether owing to accident, and this remark is sanctioned, in some measure, by the concurrence of the wise as well as the uninformed. This arises from the imperfection of human knowledge, whereby men obtain a good desired, not through the fit means as discovered by reason, but as suggested by accident. Hence the inclination is so often repugnant to availing itself of the means of acquiring a desirable object, that it is frequently coerced into them, contrary to its wishes. Hence the affairs of the world are called a lottery, where fortune presides, and reason is blind.

As, however, every effect is inseparable from its cause, and as the events of this life, which men most covet, depend upon causes, which the improved mind without doubt possesses the power of discovering, the time may and probably will arrive, in which by far the greater part, if not the whole, of those things, at present the gift of accident, will be the reward of virtue and reflection. It will then be as great a phenomenon for wisdom not to be succeeded by prosperity, as it is now to be connected with it, even in reference to those objects which it ever will deem subordinate.

ONE philosopher of great distinction, it is granted, has said that were man to consult his real happiness, he would never reflect; intimating that the act of reflection is injurious to health. This assertion on science can be traced, as it regards Rousseau, to no better origin, than that of a mind, inconsistent with itself, and discontented with every present enjoyment. The mind of Rousseau was, without doubt, a great one; it emitted, as copiously as genius or fancy could desire, the sparks of a noble intellect, which dared to disdain the shackles of prejudice, and break the chains of ignorance. But it must be allowed, that in those cases which admitted of personal application, he grossly erred, and generally suffered his strong sense to be overruled by his inexplicable feelings. Complete refutation, however, will be the portion of this injurious remark, by considering the persevering zeal, which has characterized the conduct of the cultivators of science; by considering their unanimous opinion that the moment which gives birth to a new thought is a period of unrivalled enjoyment, which has been compared to the feelings of deity at the creation; [Note E.] and lastly, by considering that longevity has, in a remarkable degree, been the reward of those, who have cultivated science. Let any one, who doubts this fact, consult a biographical dictionary, and all the prejudices he ever possessed on the subject must vanish; he will grant that as the mind depends on the exercise of the body for its vigor, so the health of the body, in its turn, is promoted

by the active employment of the faculties of the mind.

ONE great objection cannot be here overlooked ; its discussion is highly important from its connection with numerous prejudices, and particularly with the passion of avarice. It will be said that though refined happiness be intimately connected with virtue and knowledge, yet that this kind of happiness was never designed for the mass of any nation, as their subsistence depends entirely on labour, and the productiveness of labour depends on the time devoted to it.

It only requires a zealous disposition to embrace *what ought to be*, instead of clinging to *what is*, to disarm this objection of all its force. It is granted that a small portion of that time, which is at present occupied by the labour of the body, will, should these ideas be adopted, be absorbed in the exercise of the mind. But it should be observed ;

1. THAT it is not true, as implied in the objection, that the mind and body are incapable of contemporaneous employment. So far is this from being a fact, that some activity of body is absolutely necessary to vigorous reflection. The more severe the reflection, the more likely is the student to be involved in even involuntary exercise. Viewing this objection with the greatest partiality, it can only apply to those studies that require the highest abstraction of mind, which will forever be confined

to a few. Those trains of thought, which are connected with practical improvement, will be aided rather than impaired by labour, if it be not uncommonly severe.

2. The actual labour necessary to subsist man is much less than that which occupies the whole of his time. The hours at present devoted to labour are about twelve. Let us suppose these to be abridged by bringing them down to ten. A question occurs whether this diminution of time will lessen the mass of articles of necessity or convenience fabricated?—The solution of this question either affirmatively or negatively is of little consequence, though from the first suggestions of the mind it would seem important. It is not probable it would produce the diminution supposed; because ten hours of active labour may in their result be equal to twelve; as there is a protraction of labour destructive of all energy. This is so abundantly illustrated in the case of slaves, compared with freemen, that the fact needs only to be mentioned to be decisive; but yielding for a moment that ten hours of manual labour will not produce so much as twelve, will not more be gained by improved modes of labour, than is lost by this dereliction of two hours? Will not the habit of reflection and progressive improvement continually devise new means of accomplishing a given object? Have not the powers of machinery already given a new creation to manufactures? And is not agriculture equally susceptible of improvement?

BUT granting that this abridgment of labour would diminish the articles of use, is it unequivocal that this effect would be an evil? The necessaries of life would still be produced in abundance. The conveniencies of life produced would be fully equal to a moderate indulgence of its pleasures. The only deficiency existing would apply to articles of luxury. And whether these ought to be encouraged or repressed cannot be a question in a state of society in which every man is a candidate for equal happiness. An indulgence in luxury is a selfish enjoyment, which may be said to seduce every one from his duty. The less, therefore, it prevails, the better for virtue and general happiness.

3. THE relative wealth of individuals, under this arrangement, would remain the same with that under the old one, as far as it applied to the citizens of the United States. Some small difference might be produced between the relative wealth of the United States and that of foreign nations; but its effects seem too unimportant to be dwelt on.

LET us, then, consider a moderate increase of the hours of reflection, and a small decrease of those of labour, as a leading feature in a system of republican education. He, who thinks frequently, imbibes a habit of independence, and of self-esteem, which are perhaps the great and the only preservatives of virtue. Let us consider this feature as new, and as one which would be happily distinctive. Let us consider it as the prerogative of political virtue to enno-

ble man, as much as it is the assumption of political vice to degrade him.

A REVIEW of what I have written convinces me that I have entered a field which seems to acknowledge no limits. Points of morality and expedience occur in profusion, whose elucidation still demands the highest talents, after having employed, for ages, the deepest powers of research.

IN the subsequent part of my remarks, I shall, to avoid prolixity, aim at the most rigid conciseness, and trust almost entirely to the reader for an examination of what I state.

THE diffusion of knowledge, co-extensive with that of virtue, would seem to apply with close precision to a republican system of education, because ;

1. AN enlightened nation is always most tenacious of its rights.

2. IT is not the interest of such a society to perpetuate error ; as it undoubtedly is the interest of many societies differently organized.

3. IN a republic, the sources of happiness are open to all without injuring any.

4. IF happiness be made at all to depend on the improvement of the mind, and the collision of mind with mind, the happiness of an individual will greatly depend upon the general diffusion of knowledge and a capacity to think and speak correctly.

5. UNDER a Republic, duly constructed, man feels as strong a bias to improvement, as under a despotism he feels an impulse to ignorance and depression.

WE have now reached the goal of the preceding speculations. The necessary limits to an essay of this nature have prohibited minute illustration; but it has, we hope, been made to appear, with sufficient perspicuity, that human happiness depends upon the possession of virtue and wisdom; that virtue cannot be too highly cultivated; that it is only secure when allied with knowledge; and of consequence that knowledge itself cannot possibly be too extensively diffused. It follows that the great object of a liberal plan of education should be the almost universal diffusion of knowledge.

BUT as knowledge is infinite, and as its complete attainment requires more time than man has at his command, it becomes interesting to assign;

- I. THE time fit to be devoted to education.
- II. THE objects proper to be accomplished; and
- III. The manner of accomplishing them.

I. *THE time fit to be devoted to education.*

PHILOSOPHY, which is but another word for experience, has decided the happiness of man to depend upon the labour of the body and the exercise

of the mind. It had been well for mankind, had the human race in its earliest age been under the control of principles of legislation, which by a judicious apportionment of the hours of reflection to those of labour, had produced in infancy and youth habits destined from their strength to remain unimpaired in advanced age. Had the voice of philosophy dictated such a system, it would have been established on these principles. Bare subsistence requires certain articles, which are the product of labour. These are necessities of life, and must be obtained by labour. Convenience demands a further supply, the furnishing of which would occupy an additional period of labour. This convenience is essentially connected with happiness, mental as well as corporeal. Labour would, therefore, have been called upon to satisfy the claims of necessity and convenience; it would have been unseduced by the allurements of luxury.

UNFORTUNATELY for mankind no such system has been adopted. It has scarcely even been thought of. The novelty of the plan forms no objection to its truth. If it possess decided advantages, let us dare to believe human virtue equal to its accomplishment.

WE have seen that in a nation, in which the hours of labour should be abridged, and those of reflection increased, no injury would be sustained by individuals, and little, if any, by the nation itself.

It were a vain attempt, however, instantaneously to inspire with a love of science men from whose minds reflection has long been alienated. The improvement proposed must be the effect of a system of education gradually and cautiously developed.

PREVIOUSLY to any prospect of success, one principle must prevail. Society must establish the right to educate, and acknowledge the duty of having educated, all children. A circumstance, so momentously important, must not be left to the negligence of individuals. It is believed, that this principle is recognised in almost all our state constitutions. If so, the exercise of it would not be contested. Indeed, whether at present acknowledged or not, it would produce such beneficial effects, as well in reference to the parent as the child, that a general acquiescence might be relied on. [Note F.]

HAVING contemplated in reference to man an abatement of two hours of labour, the next object of enquiry is what time should be devoted to the education of youth. It should unquestionably be much larger; as during this period the mind is unimproved; as impressions of the greatest strength are rapidly made; and as the future bias of the mind entirely depends upon the improvement of these impressions. The period, however, should have its limits. Study should never be continued after it becomes oppressive. The preceptor should be as cautious in using every mean necessary to prevent dis-

gust, as he ought to be zealous in exciting a thirst of knowledge. Without aiming at rigid precision, in considering the claims of labour and study, we shall not, perhaps, materially err in assigning four hours each day to education.

II. *THE objects proper to be accomplished.*

It is necessary that the principle of an universal diffusion of knowledge should be in the highest degree energetic. This is a principle which cannot be too extensively embraced; for it is too true, that all the efforts of an enlightened zeal will never make a whole nation as well informed as its interests would prescribe.

But this necessary limit forms no objection to every practicable extension of it. We shall be furnished with irrefragable evidence of its beneficial tendency, on considering that knowledge has only produced injurious effects, when it has been the subject of monopoly. The efforts of ignorance to oppress science have excited a spirit of retaliation, which we must not be surprised at beholding, in its turn, its own avenger. The moment, however, which marks the universal diffusion of science, by withdrawing the temptation to, as well as the means of, injury, will restore knowledge to its original purity and lustre. It is with knowledge, as with every other thing which influences the human mind. It acts precisely in proportion to the force of the object acted upon. As the beggar cannot cor-

rupt by gold the beggar ; so neither can opulence corrupt opulence. In the same manner, equality of intellectual attainments is a foe to oppression ; and just as mankind shall advance in its possession, the means as well as the inducement to oppress will be annihilated. We are correct, therefore, in declaring a diffusion of knowledge, the best, perhaps the only pledge of virtue, of equality, and of independence.

LET us, then, with mental inflexibility, believe that though all men will never be philosophers, yet that all men may be enlightened ; and that folly, unless arising from physical origin, may be banished from the society of men. [Note G.]

THE ideas already expressed, and those which succeed, must be understood as applicable to a system of general education. They only prescribe what it is necessary every man should know. They do not attempt to limit his acquisitions. Wealth and genius will always possess great advantages. It will be their prerogatives, if properly directed, to carry improvement to its highest eminences.

IN forming a system of liberal education, it is necessary to avoid ideas of too general a character, as well as those which involve too minute a specification. Considerable latitude must be allowed for the different degrees of natural capacity, and the varying shades of temper and biases. It seems, therefore, fit to lay down principles which possess properties common to every mind, and which will, of course,

in their application, admit of few, if any, exceptions.

THE first great object of a liberal system of education should be, the admission into the young mind of such ideas only as are either absolutely true, or in the highest degree probable; and the cautious exclusion of all error.

WERE man able to trace every effect to its cause, he would probably find that the virtue or the vice of an individual, the happiness or the misery of a family, the glory or the infamy of a nation, have had their sources in the cradle, over which the prejudices of a nurse or a mother have presided. The years of infancy are those in which the chains of virtue or of vice are generally forged. First impressions are almost omnipotent. Their reign is silent, but not on that account the less secure. The mind no sooner begins to unfold itself than it grasps with eagerness every new idea. Intoxicated, as it were, with pleasure at its reception, it surrenders itself more to enjoyment than reflection. Indeed, it has now the capacity to enjoy, but not to reflect. In proportion to the length of time any idea occupies the mind, does it acquire strength and produce conviction. And no sooner have these ends been accomplished, than it constitutes itself the judge of every other resembling or opposing idea. Hence it tyrannizes with despotic authority.

If this view be correct, should it not be thought treason against truth and virtue, to instil prejudice

and error into the young mind? If this be treason against truth and virtue, what shall we say of those who inculcate principles which they know to be false, and attempt in this way to establish systems that only exist in the midst of human carnage and destruction?

Whether we consider man's existence as terminated by the grave, or view him, as he doubtless is, the heir of a future life, we must consider his happiness as altogether dependent on the observance of certain moral principles. The universality with which these have been received may be considered as the test of their truth. These principles are few and simple. As the mind expands they should be explained. They require no other aid than clear illustration. The unperverted understanding acknowledges their truth as it were by intuition. [Note H.]

Let then those truths in which all men agree be firmly impressed; let those which are probable be inculcated with caution, and let doubt always hang over those respecting which the good and the wise disagree. Above all things let the infant mind be protected from conviction without proof.

But it will be said that in almost all the departments of a general plan of education, the perusal of approved books must be chiefly relied on. The indispensable economy of arrangements which are to pervade a whole society, will prohibit the em-

ployment of preceptors of either great or original talents. It will therefore be fit that the preceptor, instead of inculcating his own immature ideas, should be guided by prescribed works. It is asked, where performances explaining and enforcing plain and undeniable truths, and avoiding prejudices or falsehoods, are to be found? Such productions are acknowledged to be rare. It is also granted that this difficulty presents one of the most serious obstacles to successful education. But it is not insurmountable. It is attempted to be removed, as will appear hereafter, by offering large rewards for books of this nature, and by inciting the learned by other inducements to embark in so noble a service. At present we must be satisfied in giving the preference to those works which abound most with truth and are the most exempt from error.

THE elements of education, viz. reading and writing, are so obviously necessary, that it is useless to do more than enumerate them.

OF nearly equal importance are the first principles of mathematics, as at present almost universally taught.

A TOLERABLY correct idea of Geography would seem, in a Republic especially, to involve great advantages. The interest of the mercantile part of the community is closely connected with correct geographical knowledge. Many important departments of science include an accurate knowledge of

it. But the most important consideration is that which contemplates the United States as either allied in friendship, or arrayed in hostility, with the other nations of the earth. In both which cases, it becomes the duty of the citizen to have just ideas of the position, size, and strength, of nations, that he may as much as possible, confide in his own judgment, in forming an opinion of our foreign relations, instead of yielding his mind to a dangerous credulity. A most interesting part of Geography relates to a knowledge of our own country. Correct information on this subject will always conduce to strengthen the bands of friendship, and to dissipate the misrepresentations of party prejudice.

THE cultivation of natural philosophy, particularly so far as it relates to agriculture and manufactures, has been heretofore almost entirely neglected. The benefits, however, which it would produce, are great, both as they regard the happiness of the individual, and as they regard national wealth. Many of the labours of the farmer and the mechanic, so far from forbidding reflection, invite it. Thus the constant developement of new beauties in nature, and the almost as constant production of new wonders in art, extort admiration from the most ignorant, and even impress their minds with considerable delight. And yet how little do they know of the energies of nature or art? Lost in the contemplation of effects, the tribute of a grateful mind finds vent in simple wonder.

IF we reverse the scene, and behold the farmer enlightened by the knowledge of chemistry, how wide a field of reflection and pleasure, as well as profit, would acknowledge his empire?

THE ingenuity of the mechanic would not long remain passive. Repeated efforts at improvement would often prove successful, and be the source of new and rapid wealth. At any rate in all these cases, whether prospered with the expected success or not, an adequate compensation would be conferred on the mind thus employed, whose thoughts generally bring with them their own reward.

THE circumscribed advantages, attending Geographical knowledge, will be greatly enlarged by a liberal acquaintance with History. In proportion as this branch of education shall be cultivated, men will see the mighty influence of moral principle, as well on the private individuals of a community, as on those who are called to preside over its public concerns. It will be distinctly seen, that ambition has generally risen on a destruction of every sentiment of virtue, and that it much oftener merits execration than applause. Power, long enjoyed, will appear to be hostile to the happiness, and subversive of the integrity, of the individual in whom it centres. Fanaticism and superstition will appear surrounded with blood and torture. War will stand forth with the boldest prominence of vice and folly, and make it, for a while, doubtful, whether man is most a villain or a fool. In short the mirror which

history presents will manifest to man what, it is probable, he will become, should he surrender himself up to those selfish pursuits, which centering in his own fame alone, have enabled him without horror to wade through the blood and the tears of millions.

THIS horrid truth, confirmed by every page of history, will restrain, as it undoubted has restrained, the indulgence of furious passion. The immortal admiration attached to great and disinterested virtue, the immortal detestation inseparable from great and selfish vice, will furnish the mind at once with the strongest incentives to the one, and the liveliest abhorrence of the other.

THE second leading object of education, should be to inspire the mind with a strong disposition to improvement.

It is acknowledged that science is still in its infancy. The combination of ideas is infinite. As this combination advances the circle of knowledge is enlarged, and of course, the sphere of happiness extended. At present science is only cultivated by a few recluse students, too apt to mingle the illusions of imagination with the results of indistinct observation. Hence the reproach that theory and practice oppose each other. But no sooner shall a whole nation be tributary to science, than it will dawn with new lustre. To adopt a physical illustration, its rays may be expected to meet with little absorption from ignorance, but to be reflected

with additional lustre, from every object they strike.

THE most splendid discoveries have not been made by philosophers of profound erudition and abstracted reflection, but by men of moderate attainments and correct observation. They have proceeded from steady and patient observation.

WERE the progress of a mind to improvement attended with no other effects than internal delight, it would still deserve the highest rank among those objects which produce happiness. Banishing from the mind all those sensations of indifference, ennui, and vacancy, which produce effects the more cruel from their being almost wholly without remedy, it would give to existence a thousand new charms; not fleeting, but constant and always at command. The periods of youth and of active life would be invigorated, the close of existence would become a blessing instead of a burthen. Is there any thing in existence more interesting than an old man, whose mind is stored with wisdom, and whose heart is full of sensibility?

WERE it supposed probable that any objection would be made to a vigorous spirit of research, an appeal might be made to the words of Dr. Clarke, alike eminent for distinction in virtue and science: “A free and impartial inquiry into truth is far from
“being reprehensible. On the contrary, it is a
“disposition which every man ought in himself to

“labour after, and to the utmost of his power encourage in others. It is the great foundation of all our knowledge, of all true virtue, and of all sincere religion.”

THIS progressive improvement would be promoted, in the third place, by inspiring youth with a taste for, and an attachment to, science, so firm, that it should be almost impossible to eradicate it in the subsequent periods of life.

FOR this purpose studies which address themselves to the heart, as well as those which require strong mental attention, should invite the exercise of their thoughts. Rewards should be liberally bestowed, as well those which furnish the means of moderate pleasure, as those which confer distinction. Coercion should be seldom, if ever applied.] [Note I.]

BUT this great object would be assisted, more than by any other consideration, by—

RENDERING, in the fourth place, knowledge as highly practical as possible.

THIS idea has been already noticed. But it merits a more extensive discussion. Next to the first object it claims the greatest notice.

ALL science ought to derive its rank from its utility. The real good which it actually does, or is capable of doing, is the only genuine criterion

of its value. Man may indulge himself in sublime reveries, but the world will forever remain uninterested in them. It is only when he applies the powers of his mind to objects of general use, that he becomes their benefactor; until he does this he is neither entitled to their gratitude or applause.

He is the best friend of man, who makes discoveries involving effects which benefit mankind the most extensively. Moral truths are therefore of importance but little short of infinite. For they apply to numbers which almost evade enumeration, and to time which loses itself in eternity. These truths, all agree, are not to be sought in the cloister. They are only acquired by uniting the calm and patient reflection of retirement, with the bold and penetrating observation of active life.

In physics, the happiness of mankind is in the highest degree increased by discoveries and improvements connected with agriculture and manufactures. These two occupations employ nine-tenths of most communities, and a much larger proportion of others. Does it not then become an interesting enquiry, whether it be not expedient in infancy and youth to communicate to the mind the leading principles of nature and art in these departments of labour, not only by a theoretic exposition of them, but also by their practical developement.

If almost the whole community be destined to pursue one or other of these avocations from necessity,

and if it be the duty of an individual to support himself, whenever he can, by an exertion of his own powers; and if these can only yield a sure support from an ability to be acquired in youth to prosecute a particular branch of agriculture or mechanics, does it not seem to be the duty of society to control education in such a way as to secure to every individual this ability? If this ability existed, how much misery would be annihilated, how much crime would be destroyed? Even under a government,* in which the happiness of men does not appear to have been the leading object, the nobility were obliged to be instructed fully in the principles, and partially in the practice, of a particular trade.

SHOULD, however, the justice of abridging natural right in these cases be doubted, and its expedience denied, the propriety of a union of practical with theoretic instruction will not be contested in reference to those who are designed for agriculture or mechanics.

NAKED speculation is either unintelligible or uninteresting to the young mind, while it delights in examining external appearances, and often in searching after their causes. Those objects which have engaged our earliest, and surely in some respects our happiest days, are cherished and pursued by the mind with increasing delight in advanced and old age. From this plain view of the subject, it ap-

* In France.

pears that in youth the addition of practical to theoretical knowledge would add to its charms; while in maturer age the blending theoretic with practical knowledge would render labour more agreeable and engaging.

As the period of education will, it is probable, in most instances, be protracted till the child shall be engaged in preparing himself for some employment in life, it would be important to confine his attention, in a considerable degree, to the acquisition of that kind of knowledge which would be of the greatest practical use in the profession for which he is destined. Give the mind an object worthy of its efforts, and you may rely upon their being made. In this case the child would realise the connection between its present pursuits, and its future prosperity, and this impression could not fail to kindle new ardour in its youthful breast.

THE fifth object should be the inspiring youth with an ardent love for mankind. To accomplish this end, the preceptor should cautiously avoid instilling into the mind of his pupil a mean idea of human nature. The pages of the moralist by debasing man have aided that degeneracy which they deprecate. We should not even convey a suspicion of the honesty of him whom we wish to be virtuous. Those who have led the public mind, so far from attending to this maxim, have almost universally portrayed the heart and conduct of man as infi-

nately depraved; and we have often beheld the gloomy spectacle of a misanthropic infant. If we examine the tendency of the unperverted principles of nature, we must acknowledge their hostility to that suspicion and jealousy which have proceeded from the force of education. The delight which we all feel on contemplating the absence of suspicion, is an evidence of the triumph of virtue and nature. The child has no doubt of the honesty of those about him, until his mind has received an artificial bias. Having received this unfortunate bias, and looking upon his fellow-beings as hostile, as he enters on life, he treats them with suspicion; and perhaps, on the supposition that they would pursue their own interest even to his injury, he hesitates not to pursue his to theirs. This aggression, on his part, cannot fail to produce from them that conduct which he has been taught to expect; and thus irrationally is strengthened a conviction dictated by prejudice.

WE know, in our intercourse with the world, that confidence is the parent of friendship, which forbids its subject to do an act base or dishonourable. On the other hand, it is alike evident that distrust produces enmity, and that enmity will often dictate, in the paroxysm of resentment, a mean and disgraceful action.

IN whatever light this subject is viewed by reason, it will appear that men are the creatures of sentiment, and that their virtue is often greatly,

sometimes altogether, dependent on the opinion entertained of them by others. Let us then embrace the sentiment so forcibly expressed by Sullivan, "It is not possible," says he, "for a sane mind, for any continuance, to look upon mankind, either as emmets, below his serious attention, or as monsters, more worthy of his hatred than his regard."

III. *THE manner of accomplishing the objects of education.*

THIS branch of the subject may, in many respects, claim superior importance to the other branches. It involves a more detailed statement, and more minute and specific ideas, than those which have been already discussed.

It is to be feared, however, that the necessary specification of small objects which it requires to render it clear or useful, may lessen, in the minds of some, the dignity of the subject, and expose it to the edge of ridicule. But it should be considered that as education itself altogether consists in a vigilant attention to small objects, and would be wholly defeated without such attention, so that system of education, other considerations being equal, must be the best, which, in these small objects, leaves the least to error, negligence and caprice. As in the natural world the boundless ocean takes its source in innumerable petty springs, so the mind, invigorated with extensive acquisitions, acknowledges its dependence on the humblest ideas.

BEFORE we proceed to adjust the several parts of the system, two interesting enquiries present themselves for solution.

I. At what age education should commence?

II. SHOULD education be public or private?

I. EVERY correct view of human nature shews the young mind, though tender, to be capable of great improvement. The injury it so often sustains from yielding to superstitious notions, by being sacrificed to unmanly fear, and by being wedded to numerous prejudices, abundantly attests the influence of certain ideas on the mind, which had it been honestly directed, would have embraced truth instead of delusion, and courage instead of pusillanimity. Mark the first dawnings of the mind, and say if the infant exhibit any evidence of attachment to falsehood? On the contrary, with the most engaging simplicity, you behold it giving expression to truths the most obvious. Regard the interesting credulity with which the child hears a marvellous story, until its mind labour under the oppressive burthen of a tissue of supernatural incidents. We may then assume it as an undeniable fact that an attachment to truth is the property of the unperverted mind.

WHILE this principle is in its vigour, it is infinitely important that the mind should be as highly exercised as possible. But, it is said, that it should not be fatigued, much less oppressed. Granted.

But, let it in reply be remarked, that at no period of our life, as at the earliest, are we, in some respects, so capable of a constant exercise of our faculties. Every object around, every idea within, is then new. Novelty is the source of our highest enjoyment ; of course not an object impresses the senses, not an idea is formed in the mind, which does not yield the most exquisite delight. Why is the remembrance of the scenes of childhood so dear to us, but from the interesting recollection of scenes

“ Forever varying, and forever new.”

ON this branch of the subject, we may gather correct ideas, by attending to the remarks of a writer of antiquity, who has for the most part united with masterly skill philosophy and a knowledge of human nature. Quintillian says, “ Some have
“ thought that none should be instructed in letters
“ who are under seven years of age, because that
“ early period can neither comprehend learning
“ nor endure labour.

“ But what can they do better from the time at
“ which they are able to talk ? For something
“ they must do. Or why should we slight the gain,
“ little as it is, which occurs, before the age of seven ?
“ For certainly, however little that may be
“ which the preceding age shall have contributed,
“ yet the boy will be learning greater things in that
“ very year, in which he would otherwise have
“ been learning smaller. This, extended to several
“ years, amounts to a sum ; and whatever is an-

“ anticipated in infancy, is an acquisition to the period
“ of youth.

“ LET us not then throw away even the very first
“ period ; and the less so as the elements of learn-
“ ing require memory alone, which is not only
“ found in little boys, but is very tenacious in
“ them.”

IT is true, that the measure of knowledge which infancy will receive is small. But in most systems of education it has been injudiciously restricted. The mind has lost half its vigor by being oppressed with the nomenclature of science. Languages have been exclusively forced upon it ; and it has been compelled to believe legitimate science to be as unmeaning and as barren as the words which it has acquired.

HAD a different plan been pursued ; had our native language only occupied the attention until well understood ; had the simple elements of morals and physics received concurrent inculcation, intellectual strength might have been secured instead of being spent. The mind, engaged in objects intimately connected with its own happiness, and the happiness of those around it, would have imbibed a love of knowledge, which would probably never have been lost. [Note K.]

THESE remarks are forcibly illustrated by a luminous observation of Montesquieu. “ Another

“ advantage,” says he, “ their (the Ancients) education had over ours; it never was effaced by contrary impressions. Epaminondas the last year of his life, said, heard, saw, and performed the very same things, as at the age in which he received the first principles of his education.”

ONE consideration may deserve some attention, though it is not known hitherto to have received any; and as it flows from a general law of nature, its truth is confided in. All animals excepting man are submitted almost wholly to their own efforts as to subsistence and welfare, as soon as they have acquired physical strength sufficient to protect them from the invasion of force. No animal is known to exist which does not require a certain portion of sagacity to guide it. This sagacity, it may therefore be fairly supposed to possess as soon as it attains its physical manhood. Man alone, in his present state, passes a course of years in corporeal manhood, and mental infancy. May not the idea be hazarded that this has arisen from false education, which has retarded the progress of the mind, and protracted the period of mental infancy beyond the limits assigned it by nature.

FROM these considerations, it appears, that the earlier the mind is placed under a proper regimen, the greater is the probability of producing the desired effects. Some years must be surrendered to the claims of maternal regard; some will elapse before the child is able to attend to any thing but

those external objects which irresistibly force themselves on its notice.

MAKING an allowance of five years, for these unavoidable sacrifices, and for the acquisition of those elements of knowledge which are with facility acquired in any situation, we arrive at the period of life most proper for commencing a system of general education.

It is acknowledged that there is something arbitrary in fixing the period of commencing the education of youth, as the mind varies in different persons. Still however, it seems necessary that age should decide the time fit for beginning education, which on the whole, with perhaps few variations, will be found the least exceptionable mode of giving to this part of the system a feature definite and certain; a feature which shall not be under the control of parental weakness or ignorant caprice. If at the age of five, the mind, in some children, be too tender to receive much, an intelligent instructor will be satisfied with imparting little. No danger need be apprehended from intense application at this period of life. Every idea formed in the mind will be simple, and it is only in the combination of ideas that much mental vigor is required.

II. *SHOULD education be public or private?*

THE most distinguished talents have been engaged in the discussion of this subject; and here, as in most

controversies of a speculative cast, we find a great diversity of sentiment. Quintillian and Milton are warm in their eulogium on a public, while Locke is equally animated in his praise of a private system of education. The great argument, which may be called the centre of all others urged, is the production of emulation by a public education; while the great objection made to public education, is the sacrifice, alleged to be produced, of morality and honesty.

As there is, undoubtedly, truth on both sides, it becomes necessary to consider what weight the alleged advantages and disadvantages ought to possess in determining the preference of the judgment to one over the other system. It will, perhaps, be possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting ideas, in such a way, as to make the result of benefit produced infinitely larger than the risque of injury sustained.

THE early period of life is under parental and especially maternal control. The solicitude of a mother is now the best, the only protection, which the child can receive. Some years elapse, before the mind seems capable of being impressed with true or false knowledge in a degree sufficient to influence its future expansion, and during this period, it is fortunate that we have not occasion to regret the unenlightened state of the female mind. But though these years do not mark much strength of mind, yet they rapidly unfold and form the dis-

position, which seldom fails to receive a virtuous bias from a mother, who, however vicious herself, feels deeply interested in the virtue of her offspring. Hence those amiable affections are excited which are the ornament of human nature. Before the age of five the child seldom feels a disposition to do an immoral thing; and even if it should exhibit such a symptom, the temper is so flexible, that it easily yields to a more virtuous direction.

THE young mind, having passed five years of its existence, free from much corruption, and a plan of education being now commenced, it becomes an object of consideration whether the child should remain with its parents, or be separated from them.

As a large portion of parental solicitude still exists, which alone seems capable of securing a vigilant attention to those little indications of temper and mind which now so profusely appear, it seems highly important that the child should still remain under the immediate control of parental authority. That affection which, on the part of the child, is but half formed, will have time and opportunity to gain strength, a love of domestic tranquillity will be produced, and both these principles will form a firm shield to virtue.

ON the other hand, the daily attendance at school will withdraw the mind of the child from an *entire* dependence on its parents; will place it in situati-

ons demanding the exercise of its faculties ; and will strengthen, instead of weakening, its attachment to domestic scenes. To be deprived of that which we love is in some degree painful to us all ; to children it is painful in the highest degree. Yet a habit of voluntary or compulsory abstinence from pleasure is absolutely necessary to human happiness.

THE child, in this situation, having its time divided between school, the hours of diversion, and those spent in the house of its parents, will, perhaps, remain as free from a prostration of morals, as can be expected in infancy. This, indeed, is the plan, which universally prevails in the civilized world, and its universality is certainly some argument in its favour.

LET this plan, partly domestic and partly public, be pursued till the mind begins boldly to expand itself, and to indicate an ability and an inclination to think for itself. The commencement of this capacity of combining ideas takes place about the age of ten. We have now reached the period which claims the closest attention. The mind now feels its vigour, and delights in displaying it. Ambition is kindled, emulation burns, a desire of superiority and distinction are roused.

THIS, then, appears to be the era, if ever, of public education. The indulgence of parental tenderness should now be exchanged for the patient and

unobstructed exercise of the mental powers. Let us attend to the advantages of the two rival systems at this period.

WITH regard to the plan of public Education ;

1. EMULATION is excited. Without numbers there can be no emulation. It is founded on the love of distinction. In a private family this distinction cannot be acquired.

2. An attention to study, when the child is removed from the house of its parent, may be uninterrupted ; whereas while it resides with him a thousand trifling, menial, avocations, will always take precedence. From this results the conviction in the mind of the child that study is altogether subordinate to the objects to which it is compelled to attend.

3. BUT, above every other consideration, the system of public education, inspires a spirit of independent reflection and conduct. Removed from a scene, where it has little occasion to think, and less to act, the child now finds itself placed in a situation free from rigid parental authority. [Note L.] Placed in the midst of objects of pursuit, its preference of one object to another, is often determined by its own volition. Hence reflection is excited ; and with children there is certainly no danger of too much thought ;—the only apprehension is that there being too little.

LET a spirit of independent reflection animate a large number of even youthful minds, and the acquisition of useful truths will soon be rapid. This spirit, aided by the instruction of enlightened precepts, must give an undeniable ascendancy to the public over the private plan.

ERROR is never more dangerous than in the mouth of a parent. The child, from the dawn of its existence, accustomed to receive as undoubted every idea from this quarter, seldom, if ever, questions the truth of what it is told. Hence prejudices are as hereditary as titles; and you may almost universally know the sentiments of the son by those of the father. [Note M.] Now by education remote from parental influence, the errors of the father cease to be entailed upon the child—Still farther, the child, having acquired true ideas, very often, from the superior force of truth, dissipates the errors of his parent by the remonstrances of reason.

As education professes to improve the state and character of men, and not barely to oppose their declension, it must follow that domestic education is improper, as it does no more, even if successful, than secure the last at the expence of the first.

WHEN we consider the argument urged against public education (for only one is urged with any tenacity) we shall find that the evil it deprecates arises from the imperfection of human nature, more than from any appropriate and exclusive property of public education.

“ WHEREVER there are numbers of children assembled together, there will be mischief and immorality.” This is true; but is it so extensively true as to countervail the numerous advantages which have been but partially stated? Is it equal to the injury sustained by the mechanical adoption of parental error or vice? More mischief, more immorality, have sprung from this source, than from the one complained of. On the other hand does not the conduct of children, in a public institution, in a considerable degree, resemble the actions of men in the world? The knowledge, therefore, thus acquired, though sometimes at the expence of honesty and truth, must be deemed of some importance. It is probable that it arose from the spirit of their plans of education, that Sparta was the last nation that fell a prey to the Macedonians, and Crete to the Romans. The Samnites, Montesquieu observes, had the same institutions, which furnished those very Romans with the subject of four and twenty triumphs. Indeed, though it be probable, that no plan can ever be devised, which shall admit all the advantages of an honorable and zealous competition, and exclude all the injuries heretofore so closely allied as to be deemed inseparable, yet some improvement ought not to be despaired of, amidst the universal tendency of every thing to amelioration.

THE discussion of this subject appears in some measure superseded, and the preference unequivocal

cally established of the public over the private plan, by the small expence of the first, compared with the impracticable expence of the last. If parents educated their children, the hours withdrawn from business would alone impoverish them.

BEFORE a detail is given of the course of education proposed, it may be proper concisely to state the points, which it has been the object of the preceding remarks to establish.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, virtue and wisdom have been deemed to possess an inseparable connection, and the degree and efficiency of the one has been decided to depend on the measure and vigor of the other. From this proposition the inference is deduced that a nation cannot possibly be too enlightened, and that the most energetic zeal is necessary to make it sufficiently so for the great interests of virtue and happiness.

SECONDLY. That it is the duty of a nation to superintend and even to coerce the education of children, and that high considerations of expediency not only justify, but dictate the establishment of a system, which shall place under a control, independent of, and superior to, parental authority, the education of children.

THIRDLY. The preference has been given at a certain age to public education over domestic education.

FOURTHLY. The period of education recommended has been fixed at an age so early, as to anticipate the reign of prejudice, and to render the first impressions made on the mind subservient to virtue and truth.

GUIDED by these principles it is proposed ;

I. THAT the period of education be from 5 to 18.

II. THAT every male child, without exception, be educated.

III. THAT the instructor in every district be directed to attend to the faithful execution of this injunction. That it be made punishable by law in a parent to neglect offering his child to the preceptor for instruction.

IV. THAT every parent, who wishes to deviate in the education of his children from the established system, be made responsible for devoting to the education of his children as much time as the established system prescribes.

V. THAT a fund be raised from the citizens in the ratio of their property.

VI. THAT the system be composed of primary schools ; of colleges ; and of a *University*.

VII. THAT the primary schools be divided into two classes ; the first consisting of boys from 5 to 10 years old ; the second consisting of boys from 10 to

18.—And that these classes be subdivided, if necessary, into smaller ones.

VIII. THAT the instruction given to the first class be the rudiments of the English Language, Writing, Arithmetic, the commission to memory and delivery of select pieces, inculcating moral duties, describing natural phenomena, or displaying correct fancy.

IX. THOUGH this class is formed of boys between the age of 5 and 10 years, yet should rapid acquisitions be made in the above branches of knowledge at an earlier age than that of 10, the boy is to be promoted into the second class.

X. THE most solemn attention must be paid to avoid instilling into the young mind any ideas or sentiments whose truth is not unequivocally established by the undissenting suffrage of the enlightened and virtuous part of mankind.

XI. THAT the instruction given to the second class be an extended and more correct knowledge of Arithmetic; of the English language, comprising plain rules of criticism and composition; the concise study of General History, and a more detailed acquaintance with the history of our own country; of Geography; of the laws of nature, practically illustrated. That this practical illustration consist in an actual devotion of a portion of time to agriculture and mechanics, under the superintendence

of the preceptor. That it be the duty of this class to commit to memory, and frequently to repeat, the constitution, and the fundamental laws of the United States.

XII. THAT each primary school consist of 50 boys.

XIII. THAT such boys be admitted into the college as shall be deemed by the preceptor to be worthy, from a manifestation of industry and talents, of a more extended education. That one boy be annually chosen out of the second class of each primary school for this preferment.

XIV. THAT the students at college so promoted be supported at the public expence, but that such other students may be received, as shall be maintained by their parents.

XV. THAT the studies of the college consist in a still more extended acquaintance with the above stated branches of knowledge, together with the cultivation of polite literature.

XVI. THAT each college admit 200 students.

XVII. THAT an opportunity be furnished to those who have the ability, without interfering with the established studies, of acquiring a knowledge of the modern languages, music, drawing, dancing, and fencing; and that the permission to cultivate these accomplishments be held forth as the reward of diligence and talents.

XVIII. THAT a National University be established, in which the highest branches of science and literature shall be taught. That it consist of students promoted from the colleges. That one student out of ten be annually chosen for this promotion by a majority of the suffrages of the professors of the college to which he may belong.

XIX. THAT the student so promoted be supported at the public expence, and be lodged within the walls of the University; remaining so long as he please on a salary, in consideration of his devoting his time to the cultivation of science or literature, in which last case he shall become a fellow of the University.

XX. THE number of professors in the College, and the University is not fixed; but it is proposed that the last contain a professor of every branch of useful knowledge.

XXI. IT is proposed that the professors be in the first instance designated by law; that afterwards, in all cases of vacancy, the professors of the college chuse the preceptors of the primary schools, and that the professors of the University chuse the professors of the colleges.

XXII. FOR the promotion of literature and science, it is proposed that a board of literature and science be established on the following principles:

It shall consist of fourteen persons skilled in the several branches of, 1. Languages. 2. Mathematics. 3. Geography and History. 4. Natural Philosophy in general. 5. Moral Philosophy. 6. English Language, Belle Lettres, and Criticism. 7. Agriculture. 8. Manufactures. 9. Government and Laws. 10. Medicine. 11. Theology. 12. Elements of taste, including principles of Music, Architecture, Gardening, Drawing, &c. 13. Military Tactics. And in addition, 14. A person eminently skilled in Science, who shall be President of the board.

THE persons forming the board shall, in the first instance, be determined by law, and in case of vacancy, a new election shall be held by the remaining members of the board.

TWENTY years subsequent to the commencement of the established system, all vacancies shall be supplied by a choice made in the first instance by the professors of the University, which shall be then approved by a majority of colleges, the professors of each college voting by themselves; and finally sanctioned by a majority of the fellows of the University voting. No person under 30 years of age shall be eligible.

THE persons, so elected, shall hold their offices during life, and receive a liberal salary, which shall render them independent in their circumstances. No removal shall take place unless approved by the suffrages of three-fourths of the colleges, three-

fourths of the professors of the University, and three-fourths of the fellows of the University.

It shall be the duty of this board to form a system of national education to be observed in the University, the colleges, and the primary schools; to chuse the professors of the University; to fix the salaries of the several officers; and to superintend the general interests of the institution.

As merit and talents are best secured by liberal rewards, a fund shall be established and placed under the control of this board, out of which premiums shall be paid to such persons as shall, by their writings, excel in the treatment of the subjects proposed by the board for discussion, or such as shall make any valuable discovery.

It shall further be the duty of this board to peruse all literary or scientific productions submitted to them by any citizen, and in case they shall pronounce any such work worthy of general perusal and calculated to extend the sphere of useful knowledge, it shall be printed at the public expence, and the author rewarded.

It shall be the especial duty of the board to determine what authors shall be read or studied in the several institutions, and at any time to substitute one author for another.

As the extensive diffusion of knowledge is admirably promoted by libraries, it shall be in the power

of the board to establish them, wherever it shall see fit ; and to direct all original productions of merit to be introduced into them.

It is not concealed, that on the establishment of this board, the utility, the energy, and the dignity of the proposed system are deemed greatly to depend. It will therefore be proper to exhibit with some minuteness the reasons which render such an institution expedient, or in other words to state the advantages which may be expected to be derived from it.

Our seminaries of learning have heretofore been under the management of men, either incompetent to their superintendence, or not interested in a sufficient degree in their welfare. Voluntary and disinterested services, however honorable, are but rarely to be obtained. The zeal, which embarks a man of talents in the promotion of any object, will cool, unless sustained by some substantial benefits, either received or expected. It is almost impossible in this country for the case to be different. Affluence is so uncommon that few are to be found who possess it in union with intellectual attainments. Independent of this consideration, it is generally conceded that more knowledge is to be expected from men in a subordinate sphere of life, who are constrained to cultivate their minds, than from those who can live, without such cultivation, in ease and affluence. From this combination of acknowledged facts, it must clearly appear that every

advantage will flow from the institution of the proposed board, which either does or can proceed from those formed on the existing plans, and that great and exclusive additional benefits may be expected.

THE high responsibility of this board will insure its fidelity. Every member of it, being distinguished by eminent attainments in some department of learning, will be constrained by the powerful obligations due to character, to superintend with zeal and honesty those concerns specially delegated to him. No branch of science or literature will flourish at the expence of another, as they will all be represented at this board. This board being the source from which all inferior appointments proceed, if it be governed in its choice of persons by incorrupt and intelligent motives, the several stations of professors and preceptors will probably be filled with men equally eminent for knowledge and industry.

So far the advantages connected with the establishment of such a board have been contemplated in their immediate relation to the education of youth. Benefits, equally great and more splendid, will flow to society, from the security given to morals, and the impulse given to science. To this board, if liberally endowed with funds, talents will look for sure protection and encouragement. Not only talents previously existing will be rewarded and animated to the noblest efforts, but talents which had never otherwise existed, will trace their crea-

tion to this institution. The reliance on having publicity given to their discoveries and researches; and the being rewarded by fame and some share of pecuniary assistance, will encourage all those who feel conscious of possessing great powers of mind, to give them activity and expansion.

As it may be relied upon that a body of men, well known, and possessing a full sense of the value of character, will guard with peculiar circumspection, the interests of virtue, and will only reward talents when exerted in its cause, we may expect that authors, as they regard the approbation of this board, will be careful to promote and not attack morals. Hence it may be inferred that fewer vicious productions will issue from the press, than at present disgrace it.

WHEN it is considered how slow literary merit is at present in receiving its reward, and that posthumous is more frequent than living fame; when it is considered how detrimental this circumstance is to the acquisition of knowledge; when it is further considered that poverty is almost always the sure lot of devotion to science; it becomes difficult to assign limits to the advantages which science would derive from always knowing where to meet with protection, and receive both reputation and pecuniary reward. Every work recommended to general acceptance by this board would surely go into a rapid circulation, which of itself will generally amply recompense the author.

If any one circumstance be more connected with the virtue and happiness of the United States than another, it is the substitution of works defining correctly, political, moral and religious duty, in the place of those which are at present in use. The radical ideas we have already established, and which are in a great measure peculiar to us, claim a new and entirely different exposition from that which they have yet received. Every new work, therefore, which comes from the pen of a citizen, may be deemed an important acquisition, a stay to our virtue and a shield to our happiness.

EXCLUSIVELY of the enumerated advantages, which science may derive from this board, great advances in knowledge may be expected from the individual contributions of its several members. Inured in the early period of their lives to close application, having acquired the habits of patient and persevering study, and at length being placed in independent and easy circumstances, we need not fear disappointment in expecting from them performances and discoveries of the first order.

In considering the objections likely to be urged against embracing the plan of education here proposed, only two of much importance are foreseen. The first is its extensiveness, the second its expence.

As the extensiveness can only be objectionable in reference to the expence, this alone seems to require examination.

To give a fair trial to this system, liberal compensation should be allowed to the preceptors and professors. Their offices should be esteemed as honorable as any employments, either public or private, in the community; and one sure way of rendering them so is to attach to them independence. Without this appendage we shall in vain expect that exclusive attention to science and professional duty, which can alone accomplish the ends desired.

THE necessary expence must, then, be submitted to without reluctance. On an enquiry into the sources of taxation we shall find more encouragement than discouragement. When it is stated that the wealth of the state of Pennsylvania alone may be estimated at more than 400 million of dollars, it will at once be seen how little the most liberal sum, raised for the purpose of education, would partake of burthen or oppression. When on the other hand the greatness of the object is correctly estimated and truly felt, all prejudices ought at once to be annihilated; and it is only doing justice to the patriotism of our citizens to believe that they would be annihilated.

Two subjects connected with a general system of education, viz. female instruction, and that which has been called ornamental, have been avoided. Both of these certainly involve very important considerations. But in the existing diversity of opinion respecting the nature and extent of the first, such coincidence and agreement as to produce a system

must absolutely be despaired of. It is sufficient, perhaps, for the present that the improvement of women is marked by a rapid progress, and that a prospect opens equal to their most ambitious desires.—With regard to ornamental instruction, it would seem to rest more on principles of expediency than of necessity. It may, also, be considered as a kind of mental luxury, which like that of a grosser nature, will imperceptibly, but surely, by the allurements and pleasures which its cultivation holds forth, insinuate itself into general acceptance. But as it is of some consequence, that a plan of instruction in the polite arts should be devised, which so far from being incompatible with, might aid the promotion of branches of knowledge more immediately necessary, it is proposed, that a limited opportunity be offered in the colleges, and a full one in the university, to become acquainted with the principles as well as execution of every polite art. The effects of these elegant pursuits on the mind and temper are of the most beneficial nature. [Note N.] They may be emphatically denominated the finished offspring of civilization and refinement. Besides, a system of sufficient comprehensiveness should contain a department for every species of genius. Every spark of mental energy should be cherished. The mind should be left free to chuse its favourite object, and when chosen should find the means of prosecuting it with ardour.

SUCH is the system proposed. Its imperfections are beyond doubt numerous. Of this fact, no man can be more sensible than their author. In the discussion of a subject, which has ably employed the pens of the most distinguished writers, without producing a general conviction of the preference of one plan over another, it became the writer to exercise as much diffidence as consists with the exposition of truth. If he has manifested in any part of the preceding speculations the appearance of arrogant confidence in his own sentiments, he trusts it will be ascribed to his impressions of the importance of the subject, and not to a vain attachment to his peculiar ideas. He who is solemnly impressed with interesting truths, will think with energy, and express his thoughts with decision.

NOTWITHSTANDING the universal agreement of all men in this country as to the necessity of a reform in education, so essentially do their professions disagree with their actions, that nothing short of the commanding eloquence of truth, without cessation thundered on their ears, can produce that concurrence of action, that unity of effort, which shall give efficiency to a wise system of education. Let then the voice of the good man mingle with that of the wise in announcing the necessity of speedily adopting such a measure. Instead of one party denouncing another for equivocal political crimes, let all parties unite in attesting their patriotism by their co-operating efforts in so great a cause. Is it a

question with any man whether our liberties are secure? Let him know that they depend upon the knowledge of the people, and that this knowledge depends upon a comprehensive and energetic system of education. It is true that some nations have been free without possessing a large portion of illumination; but their freedom has been precarious and accidental, and it has fallen as it rose.

THE two things which we are most interested in securing are harmony at home, and respect abroad. By calling into active operation the mental resources of a nation, our political institutions will be rendered more perfect, ideas of justice will be diffused, the advantages of the undisturbed enjoyment of tranquillity and industry will be perceived by every one, and our mutual dependence on each other will be rendered conspicuous. The great result will be harmony. Discord and strife have always proceeded from, or risen upon, ignorance and passion. When the first has ceased to exist, and the last shall be virtuously directed, we shall be deprived of every source of misunderstanding. The sword would not need a scabbard, were all men enlightened by a conviction of their true interests.

HARMONY at home must produce respect abroad. For the æra is at hand when America may hold the tables of justice in her hand, and proclaim them to the unresisting observance of the civilized world. Her numbers and her wealth vie with each other in

the rapidity of their increase. But the immutable wisdom of her institutions will have a more efficient moral influence, than her physical strength. Possessed of both she cannot fail to assume, without competition, the station assigned her by an overruling power.

SUCH is the bright prospect of national dignity and happiness, if America give to her youth the advantages of a liberal and just education. On the other hand, should avarice, prejudice, or malice, frustrate this great object, and should a declension of knowledge, gradually, but not the less decisively as to a future period, be suffered to triumph, the prospect is gloomy and dreadful. Gigantic power misapplied, towering ambition unfatiated with criminal gratification, avarice trampling poverty under foot, mark but a few of the dark shades which will, in all probability, envelop our political horizon. On such an event, we must expect the miseries of oppression at home, and conquest abroad.

It may interest the attention, as it certainly will amuse the fancy, to trace the effects of the preceding principles of education on a future age. It has been observed that however virtuous, enlightened and vigorous our first efforts to aggrandize the human character, it were, notwithstanding, folly to expect the celerity of preternatural agency. A system founded on true principles must gradually and cautiously eradicate error, and substitute truth. The period, will, therefore, be remote before the

world is benefitted by its complete development.

LET US contemplate the effects of a just system,

I. ON THE INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN.

II. ON THE UNITED STATES.

III. ON THE WORLD.

I. THE citizen, enlightened, will be a freeman in its truest sense. He will know his rights, and he will understand the rights of others; discerning the connection of his interest with the preservation of these rights, he will as firmly support those of his fellow men as his own. Too well informed to be misled, too virtuous to be corrupted, we shall behold man consistent and inflexible. Not at one moment the child of patriotism, and at another the slave of despotism, we shall see him in principle forever the same. Immutable in his character, inflexible in his honesty, he will feel the dignity of his nature and cheerfully obey the claims of duty. He will look upon danger without dismay, for he will feel within himself the power of averting, or the faculty of disarming it. With Lucretius, he may say,

“It is a view of delight to stand or walk on the shore side and to see a ship tossed with tempest upon the sea, or to be in a fortified tower, and to see two battles joined upon a plain. But it is

“ a pleasure incomparable for the mind of man to
“ be settled, landed and fortified in the certainty
“ of truth, and from thence to descry and behold
“ the errors, perturbations, labours and wanderings
“ up and down of other men.”

THE love of knowledge, which even a moderate portion of information never fails to inspire, would at the same time shut up many sources of misery, and open more sources of happiness. The love of wealth would cease to be the predominant passion of the heart; other objects would divide the attention, and perhaps challenge and receive a more constant regard.

THE acquisition of knowledge is open to all. It injures no one. Its object is disinterested. It delights in distinction only so far as it increases the mass of public good. Here then is an object which all may pursue without the interference of one with another. So far from producing interference, it will constantly tend to destroy it; for the more men think, the more they will resemble each other, and the more they resemble each other, the stronger will their mutual attachment be.

II. VIEWING the effects of such a system on the United States; the first result would be the giving perpetuity to those political principles so closely connected with our present happiness. In addition to these might be expected numerous improvements in our political economy.

By these means government without oppression, and protection without danger, will exist in their necessary strength.

POLITICS are acknowledged to be still in their infancy. No circumstance could so rapidly promote the growth of this science as an universal illumination of mind. The minds of millions centering in one point, could not fail to produce the sublimest discoveries. Hence the prospect that our political institutions would quickly mature into plans as perfect as human happiness would require.

IF all the genius of a nation could be impelled into active exertion, philosophy, both moral and physical, would soon present a new face. Every new discovery would probably tend to abridge the labour of the body, and to allow opportunity, as well as inspire inclination, to cherish reflection. Man would feel himself in possession of two extensive sources of enjoyment, the exercise of the body, and the reflection of the mind; and he would soon find the last as submissive as the first.

THIS state of things could not fail to elevate the United States far above other nations. Possessed of every source of happiness, under the guardianship of all necessary power, she would soon become a model for the nations of the earth. This leads in the third place to,

III. THE consideration of the effects of such a system on the world.

NATION is influenced as powerfully by nation, as one individual is influenced by another. Hence no sooner shall any one nation demonstrate by practical illustration the goodness of her political institutions, than other nations will imperceptibly introduce corresponding features into their systems. No truth is more certain, than that man will be happy if he can. He only wants a complete conviction of the means, to pursue them with energy and success. This conviction the United States may be destined to flash on the world.

INDEPENDENT of this necessary effect, other effects will be produced. Many of the most enlightened of our citizens will traverse the globe with the spirit of philosophical research. They will carry with them valuable information and an ardent enthusiasm to diffuse it. Its diffusion will be the æra of reform wherever it goes.

BUT more important, still, will be the example of the most powerful nation on earth, if that example exhibit dignity, humility and intelligence. Scarcely a century can elapse, before the population of America will be equal, and her power superior, to that of Europe. Should the principles be then established, which have been contemplated, and the connection be demonstrated between human happiness and the peaceable enjoyment of industry and the indulgence of reflection, we may expect to see America too enlightened and virtuous to spread the horrors of war over the face of any country,

and too magnanimous and powerful to suffer its existence where she can prevent it. Let us, then, with rapture anticipate the æra, when the triumph of peace and the prevalence of virtue shall be rendered secure by the diffusion of useful knowledge.

NOTES.

NOTE A.—p. 23.

“ **A**STRONOMY is not merely a speculative science ; its use is as extensive as its researches are profound. To it, navigation owes its safety ; to it, commerce is indebted for its extension, and Geography for its improvement. But, what above all, speaks its praise, is, that it has led the way to the diffusion of knowledge, and to the civilization of mankind.”

Sullivan, vol. 1. p. 426.

NOTE B.—p. 23.

“ What benefits do we receive from the celebrated deeds of an Alexander or a Cæsar ? But Pythagoras gave us our commerce and our riches ; if it be true, that he invented the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid, which is the foundation of Trigonometry, and consequently of Navigation.”

Sullivan, vol. 6. p. 303.

NOTE C.—p. 23.

“ Generally let this be a rule, that all partitions of knowledge, be accepted rather for lines and veins, than for sections and separations; and that the continuance and entireness of knowledge be preserved. For the contrary hereof hath made particular sciences to become barren, shallow, and erroneous, while they have not been nourished and maintained from the common fountain.”

Bacon, vol. 2. p. 478.

NOTE D.—p. 29.

“ And it is without all controversy, that learning doth make the minds of men gentle, generous, amiable, and pliant to government; whereas ignorance makes them churlish, thwarting and mutinous: And the evidence of time doth clear this assertion, considering that the most barbarous, rude and unlearned times have been most subject to tumults, seditions and changes.”

Bacon, vol. 2. p. 421.

NOTE E.—p. 32.

“ Is not such the delight of mental superiority, that none on whom nature, or study, have conferred it, would purchase the gifts of fortune by its loss.”

Sullivan, vol. 6. p. 110.

NOTE F.—p. 39.

“ It is proper to remind parents, that their children belong to the state, and, that in their education, they ought to conform to the rules which it prescribes.”

Preliminary speech of Cambaceres, on a plan of a Civil Code for France.

NOTE G.—p. 41.

“ Let no man, upon a weak conceit of sobriety, or an
 “ ill applied moderation, think or maintain, that a man
 “ can search too far, or be too well studied in the books
 “ of God’s word, or in the book of God’s work; divinity
 “ or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endless
 “ progress, or proficiencie in truth.”

Bacon’s works, vol. 2. p. 417.

NOTE H.—p. 43.

“ The savage receives divine truths carelessly, hears them
 “ with indifference, apprehends them confusedly, and suf-
 “ fers them soon to be obliterated from his memory. But a
 “ *Newton* listens to them attentively, weighs them delibe-
 “ rately, comprehends them accurately, and keeps them in
 “ careful remembrance. *In short nothing can secure the mind*
 “ *from error and imposture, but the precision arising from a can-*
 “ *did philosophical spirit, which admits no terms that are not*
 “ *clear; no premises that are not evident; and no conclusions*
 “ *that do not intuitively follow premises well ascertained.*”

Sullivan’s view of Nature, vol. 2. p. 231.

NOTE I.—p. 49.

“ The end of masters in the long course of their studies
 “ is to habituate their scholars to serious application, to
 “ make them love and value the sciences, and to cultivate
 “ such a taste as shall make them thirst after them when
 “ they are gone from school.” Rollin.

NOTE K.—p. 57.

“ There is nothing to hinder a child from acquiring
 “ every useful branch of knowledge, and every elegant ac-

“ accomplishment suited to his age, without impairing his
 “ constitution; but then the greatest attention must be paid
 “ to the powers of the body and the mind, that they nei-
 “ ther be allowed to languish for want of exercise, nor be
 “ exerted beyond what they can bear.” Dr. Gregory.

Further,

“ He, who in his early age, has been taught to study
 “ and revere the characters of the sages, heroes, statesmen,
 “ and philosophers, who adorn the annals of Greece and
 “ Rome, will necessarily imbibe the most liberal notions.
 “ He will catch a portion of that generous enthusiasm,
 “ which has warmed the hearts, and directed the conduct,
 “ of the benefactors and ornaments of the human race.”

Knox, p. 172.

NOTE L.—p. 63.

“ Too long have we been accustomed to consider as an
 “ authority, a duty of protection engraved by nature in our
 “ hearts. Contrary to the eternal order of thing, a power
 “ of administration has been turned to the exclusive advan-
 “ tage of those by whom it was exercised. This mistaken
 “ idea originated in the opinion long implicitly received,
 “ that man can belong to man, an atrocious system which
 “ the Romans modified in the days of their refinement,
 “ and which we propose totally to overthrow, by reducing
 “ the relations between father and child to kindness and be-
 “ nefits on the one side, and to respect and gratitude on the
 “ other.”

Preliminary speech of Cambaceres, on a plan of a civil
 Code for France.

NOTE M.—p. 64.

These are the sentiments of Juvenal, whom justice forbids us solely to regard as a poet. His character is only duly appreciated by considering him as one of the most enlightened and inflexible moralists of antiquity.

“ There are many reprehensible things which the parents themselves point out and hand down to their children—
 “ So nature orders it; the examples of vice which we see at home corrupt us sooner than any other—One or two, whose hearts Titan has formed of better clay, and with a partial hand, may, indeed escape the influence of such example; but the rest are led into those footsteps of their fathers which ought to be shunned; and the path of some habitual vice pointed out for a long time, by a parent, draws them into it.”

NOTE N.—p. 78.

“ A just taste in the fine arts, by sweetening and harmonizing the temper, is a strong antidote to the turbulence of passion. Elegance of taste procures to a man so much enjoyment at home, or easily within reach, that, in order to be occupied, he is, in youth, under no temptation to precipitate into hunting, gaming, drinking; nor, in middle age, to avarice. A just relish of what is beautiful, proper, elegant, and ornamental, in writing or painting, in architecture or gardening, is a fine preparation for discerning what is beautiful, just, elegant or magnanimous in character or behaviour.” Lord Kaims’s elements of criticism.

“ The truth is, that polite learning is found by experience to be friendly to all that is amiable and laudable in social intercourse; friendly to morality. It has a secret

“but powerful influence in softening and meliorating the
“disposition. True and correct taste directly tends to
“restrain the extravagancies of passion, by regulating that
“nurse of passion, a disordered imagination.”

Knox's plan of a liberal Education, p. 8.

THE END.